

## TITLE

Louisiana Environmental and Health Effects Tracking Program: A Partnership of Public Health and Environmental Regulatory Agencies

## THEME

Foster Collaborations Among Health and the Environment

## KEYWORDS

public health, environment, tracking, collaboration, partnerships

## BACKGROUND

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH), Office of Public Health (OPH) and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) frequently collaborate to promote and protect the environment and public health. This partnership is strengthened by Louisiana Legislative Act 666, an unfunded mandate requiring both agencies to assemble a working group of experts to develop a standardized environmental health surveillance system (EHSS). The proposed goal of the EHSS is to study environmental and social factors, and diseases affecting Louisiana residents to determine if environmental disease trends exist. In collaboration with LDEQ, LDHH/OPH applied for a Cooperative Agreement from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) National Environmental Public Health Tracking Program (EPHT) to develop the Louisiana Environmental and Health Effects Tracking Program (LEHET). The LEHET will complete a demonstration project using selected existing data from LDEQ, OPH Safe Drinking Water Program (SDWP) and the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center (LSUHSC) Louisiana Tumor Registry (LTR). LDEQ groundwater data, SDWP drinking water data, and LTR cancer data associated with closed or abandoned wood preservation and treatment facilities will be compiled. These data will be analyzed for trends and possible further study.

## OBJECTIVE(S)

Establish and formalize methods for intra- and inter-agency collaboration and data sharing for environmental public health tracking.

## METHOD(S)

Memorandum-of-Understanding, Inter-agency Agreement, Working Group, Community Consortium, site maps, EDMS searches, and data parameters.

## RESULT(S)

Geographic Information System (GIS), multimedia environmental health education materials.

## DISCUSSION/RECOMMENDATION(S)

LDEQ plays an integral role in all components of the LEHET program. A Working Group meets monthly to discuss data sharing, technical standards and program updates. LDEQ also participates in the Community Consortium, a diverse group of professional and community organizations that meets bi-annually to discuss and evaluate the LEHET work plan. In consultation with the Tulane Center of Excellence, LDEQ and LDHH/OPH developed data parameters and are working to convert environmental data into a usable format for the demonstration project. LDEQ has provided LDHH/OPH with access to the Electronic Data Management System (EDMS), which houses all of LDEQ's environmental data and site reports. LDEQ will extract groundwater data from the EDMS and LDHH/OPH will incorporate the data into a tracking system, along with drinking water data and cancer data. LDEQ has provided LDHH/OPH with maps and other geographical information to complete preliminary work on the LEHET GIS, which will allow for spatial analysis of the sites and development of an interactive map on the LEHET website. LDEQ is currently evaluating their needs to move towards a standardized Electronic Data Deliverables (EDD) format for the entire department, and LDHH/OPH will participate in this endeavor. This collaboration will enhance the capacity for environmental public health tracking, making it feasible, sustainable and more readily incorporated into a national EPHT system.

## AUTHOR(S)

Todd E. Page, M.P.H., B.A.  
Environmental Health Scientist Supervisor  
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health  
325 Loyola Avenue, Suite 210  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
504-568-8537  
[tpage@dhh.la.gov](mailto:tpage@dhh.la.gov)

Emán M. Williams, M.S.P.H., B.S.  
Environmental Health Scientist  
Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals, Office of Public Health  
325 Loyola Avenue, Suite 210  
New Orleans, LA 70112  
504-568-8537  
[ewillia5@dhh.la.gov](mailto:ewillia5@dhh.la.gov)

